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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL
FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
Ninth meeting
New York, 29 February 1996

REPORT OF THE STATES PARTIES

1. The ninth meeting of the States parties was called to order on 29 February 1996 by Ambassador Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria), the temporary Chairperson. The meeting elected Ms. Kerry Buck (Canada) as Chairperson of the meeting and four Vice-Chairpersons (Fiji, Lithuania, Mexico and United Republic of Tanzania) and adopted the provisional agenda (CEDAW/SP/1996/1).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General made a statement in which she informed the States parties that 151 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention. She also drew attention to several recommendations concerning the Convention which had been adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing in September 1995. These included a recommendation for the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the year 2000. The Conference urged Governments to limit the extent of their reservations to the Convention and to withdraw reservations that were contrary to its object and purpose. Moreover, Governments should formulate reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible. The Conference also recommended that States parties to the Convention, when reporting under article 18 of the Convention, should include in their reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) information on measures taken to implement the Platform for Action.

3. The representative of the Secretary-General also reported on decisions and suggestions adopted by the Committee at its fifteenth session, including those on the length and frequency of the sessions of the Committee, relations with non-governmental organizations, an optional protocol on the right to petition to the Convention, overdue reports from States parties and amendment of the guidelines for reports by States parties to reflect the recommendation of the

Fourth World Conference on Women that States parties include information on measures taken to implement the Platform for Action when presenting their country report to the Committee.

4. In accordance with article 17, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the Convention, the States parties elected by secret ballot 11 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, of which 6 were current members proposed for re-election. The experts re-elected were Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Germany); Silvia Cartwright (New Zealand); Carlota Bustelo García del Real (Spain); Ahoua Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso); Salma Khan (Bangladesh); and Kongit Sinegiorgis (Ethiopia). The new members were: Yung-Chung Kim (Republic of Korea); Aída Gonzáles (Mexico); Anne Lise Ryel (Norway); Yolanda Ferrer Gómez (Cuba); and Ayse Feride Acar (Turkey). The list of all the candidates and their curricula vitae were contained in a note by the Secretary-General (CEDAW/SP/1996/3 and Add.1).

5. The meeting also had before it a document (CEDAW/SP/1996/2) on article 28 of the Convention, which provides that the Secretary-General shall receive and circulate to all States parties the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession. It also provides that the Secretary-General shall inform States parties of any reservation withdrawn by notification after such notifications were received.

6. Under agenda item 6, Finland introduced a draft resolution on "Meeting time of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW/SP/1996/L.1). Sponsors of the draft resolution were Angola, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belize, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Malawi, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the United Republic of Tanzania, Turkey, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

7. The representative of the Secretary-General made a statement on financial implications before the adoption of the draft resolution. While it was clearly stated in the draft resolution as presented that the request for additional meeting time for the Committee should be considered by the General Assembly within the overall existing budget framework, the Secretariat was obliged to make a statement on financial implications in view of the current financial situation faced by the Organization, namely, that: "In adopting the programme budget for 1996-1997, the General Assembly decided that savings of $103.9 million were to be achieved in the programme budget during the biennium. Under the circumstances, it was not possible at this stage to modify the calendar of conferences in order to accommodate the additional meetings of CEDAW in 1997. The possibility of additional meetings would be reviewed at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly."

8. The meeting then adopted the draft resolution contained in document CEDAW/SP/1996/L.1 (see annex).

ANNEX

Meeting time of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

The States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Recalling General Assembly resolution 49/164 of 23 December 1994 on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and decision 49/448 also of 23 December 1994 on consideration of the request for the revision of article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention,

Taking note with appreciation of General Assembly resolution 50/202 of 22 December 1995 in which it urged for an early acceptance and entry into force of the amendment to the Convention,

Reiterating the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as well as the contribution of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the United Nations efforts to eliminate discrimination against women,

Noting that the workload of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has increased as a result of the growing number of States parties to the Convention, and that the annual session of the Committee is the shortest of all the annual sessions of the human rights treaty bodies,

Recalling decision 1 on increasing the meeting time of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted by the Committee at its fifteenth session, as well as its general recommendation 22 on the same subject,

Welcoming the efforts made by the Committee to improve its procedures and working methods, and encouraging it to continue such efforts,

Convinced that an adequate amount of time for the meetings of the Committee is one of the vital factors in ensuring the continued effectiveness of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in future years,

1. Recognize the need to introduce a temporary measure to enable the Committee to reduce the backlog until the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, enters into force;

2. Support the request made by the Committee at its fifteenth session for additional meeting time so as to allow the Committee to hold two sessions annually, each of three weeks' duration each preceded by a pre-session working group, starting from 1997 for an interim period;

3. Recommend that the General Assembly at its fifty-first session approve the request of the Committee, within the overall existing budget framework, in order to enable the Committee to continue to reduce the backlog in reports of States parties awaiting review.